

# WASHING FOR BREAD

*by Rabbi Daniel Travis*

The halachos of washing for bread are more stringent than washing netilas yadayim in the morning. When washing for bread, one must use a utensil and the person must pour the water on his hands (ko'ach gavra). Although one is not obligated to follow these practices for netilas yadayim in the morning, it is praiseworthy to do so (Rema 4,7).

One would expect the blessing on washing one's hands to mention the word "washing." Instead we say netilas yadayim, which refers to the utensil one uses to wash one's hands (Rosh, Berachos 9,23). Even though one can perform this mitzvah by washing his hands without a utensil, since washing for bread requires the use of a utensil, we always mention the utensil in the berachah (Rema 4,7).

Washing in a manner that is also appropriate in preparation for eating bread causes an interesting halachic quandary. A person will generally sit down to eat breakfast directly after praying. Since he has just recited the blessing of netilas yadayim before tefillah, may he recite the berachah again when washing for bread?

Some halachic authorities say that since a person might have become impure while praying, he can still recite netilas yadayim before eating bread (Rav Moshe Sternbuch). Others rule that since it is very likely that in this short time his hands did not become impure, it is problematic to recite the blessing. Preferably he should obligate himself to make the berachah again by touching his shoes, so that the berachah of netilas yadayim may be recited (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, as cited in Halichos Shlomo 2[36]).

---

Text Copyright © 2013 by Rabbi Daniel Travis and [Torah.org](https://torah.org)